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GOVERNMENT DIRECTIVE ON CARE OF FORESTS -- Peiping, Jen-min Jih-pao, 4 Oct 53

[The following interpretation of the directive on care of forests of the Government Administration Council, issued on 9 July 1953, was signed by Premier Chou En-lai on 30 September 1953 and released by Hsin-hua 2 October 1953.]

During the last 3 years, throughout the nation 1,750,000 hectares have been reforested and an additional 114,000 hectares have been designated as forest reserve.

Each year the amount of reforested area has been increased. The survival rate of saplings has been higher. There has been more organized endeavor to protect the trees. Indiscriminate lumbering has been stopped. Destruction from fire has been greatly lessened. Some large-scale protective forest belts have been planted in the Northeast and Northwest.

In planting protective belts of trees, care must be taken not to encroach upon the small farmers' property rights nor upon land already under cultivation. Instead of peremptorily forbidding the cultivation of land on steep slopes, careful instruction should be given in terrace farming.

The general principle in forestry is that whoever plants the trees owns them, whether an individual, a group, or a village. There should be full guarantee of property rights. In localities near mines, land can be allocated to the mines for reforestation. In the case of railways and highways, both sides of the right of way should be planted by these organizations.

After timber has been cut, seedlings should at once be planted and protected to provide a constant supply of timber.

The people must be aroused to protect the forests from fire, especially in the case of the large areas of national forests. The main cause of fire is the farmer's clearing of land for cultivation so one way to stop fires is to forbid any such opening of new land. Consideration must be given, however, to the real needs of the farmer. No hard and fast line is to be drawn. Land which is half-wooded and half-field must be treated the same as real forest land. In places like Inner Mongolia, where the people are accustomed to burn off grass for pasture land, the people should be taught the danger, but permitted to follow habitual practices if they can guarantee that the fire will not spread.

There must be strict prohibition of indiscriminate cutting of trees, yet allowance must be made for the fact that those near the mountains must get their living from the mountains. The secret, again, is mass education.

Since the all-important task of caring for forests depends upon the masses of people who as individual farmers are themselves small producers and owners, it is necessary that their personal interests be looked after before they will become active supporters of forest care.

Forest rights must be made out and protected. If the forested hills are confiscated from the landlords have not yet been divided, they should now be allocated to individuals, or groups, or become the common property of villages. In such cases owners are perfectly free to cut down their own trees. The requirement of a permit from the local government has been abolished. If there is reckless destruction of trees only instruction and persuasion can be employed.

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The farmer must be aided in selling his timber. In the south where forests are privately owned, within definite limits and under strict government control, there should be a policy of free buying and selling of timber, abolishing the policy of complete official control of timber.

The lumber policy should be determined by each province according to its own peculiar circumstances, and carried out after approval by the Government Administrative Council. The national buying organs should settle on definite prices for timber after taking into consideration the costs of production, transportation, and selling.

Reforestation and the care of forests must become one of the main tasks of government at every level to meet the growing needs of industry and agriculture. It must also be one of the topics discussed at each large conference of people's delegates.

FOREST FIRE PREVENTION -- Peiping, Jen-min Jih-pao, 11 Oct 53

The lumbering industry has expanded in the Northeast. A lumbering railway line has been extended to the primeval forests of the Greater Khingan Range. Fire prevention watch towers have been repaired. Inner Mongolia airplane flights for fire detection began the middle of September.

In the Northeast, emphasis in the fall of 1953 has been on reconciling the conflict of interests between fire prevention and individual gain from use of the forests. In August 1953, the Northeast Administrative Committee issued regulations governing entrance to the forests. People from the local village or ch'u who wish to enter the forests to supplement their livelihood must obtain permits from their local authorities. If a man wishes to go into another ch'u or another province for lumbering his local authorities must write a letter of recommendation to the place to be visited where the hsien government will examine the letter and issue a permit to enter the forested hills to work.

In the spring of 1953, after experiencing a forest fire on the Hunan-Kwangsi border, Hunan Province has taken the initiative in organizing a joint fire prevention set-up with five other provinces, Kwangtung, Kwangsi, Kiangsi, Szechwan, and Kweichow.

FORESTRY PROTECTIVE BELT STARTED IN NORTH SHENSI PROVINCE -- Sian, Ch'un-chung Jih-pao, 11 Jun 53

Preparations are being made to plant a large forestry protective belt in the Wu-ting Ho basin in northern Shensi Province. In April 1953, Liang Hsi, Minister of Forestry, and a Russian forestry specialist, Nien-na-lo-k'uo-mo-fu [Nenaloikov] inspected the Wu-ting Ho basin. The Ministry of Forestry also sent a team to inspect this river basin thoroughly and to draw up a large-scale plan for a protective forestry belt.

The Shensi Province Wu-ting Afforestation Office has already done various preparatory work. State nurseries have been established in 13 places with seedlings planted on 672 mu, while seedlings on 543 additional mu are cared for as a joint enterprise with farmers cooperative nurseries. It is estimated that 1,300,000 seedlings will be grown. The seedlings used are those of the ash, the Alantus, the elm, and other varieties.

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LOCAL PRODUCTS EXPORT COMPANY BUYS OAK FOR EXPORT -- Sian, Ch'un-chung Jih-pao,
21 Jul 53

The Northeast branch of the China Local Products Export Company is making plans for the extensive purchase of chestnut oak lumber for export. Articles made from this lumber have special insulating qualities and are resistant to heat and vibration. The lumber is widely used in industry and is valuable in the manufacture of such articles as bottle stoppers and life-preservers.

This chestnut oak is found on the southern slope of the Ch'in Ling [range of mountains in South Shensi], in the Ta-pa Shan area [Szechuan] and in such places as Feng Hsien [Shensi] and Liang-tang Hsien [Kansu] on the borders of Shensi and Kansu provinces.

An office newly established in the Northwest began buying this wood in May. By mid-June, the first consignment of 120,000 cunties will be ready for export.

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